THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) The WTO agreements do not require any Member country to import any product. WTO Agreements only lay down the rules for global trade to be followed by the WTO Members. India's total imports during the last 3 years were:

| Year | Imports | |
|---|---|---|
| | in Rs. crore | in $ million |
| 2004-05 | 490,532 | 109,173 |
| 2003-04 | 359,108 | 78,150 |
| 2002-03 | 297,206 | 61,412 |

(b) There is no indication that imports have adversely affected India's economy.

(c) and (d) Do and arise, in view of (b) above.

**Export of Indian Marine Products**

760. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether export of Indian Marine Products have been adversely affected because of Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) measures;

(b) if so, the details thereof, product-wise, country-wise and year-wise during the last two years;

(c) the details of the impact of the sea food sector in the country; and

(d) the details of steps taken by Government to enhance export of sea food?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) While there have been instances of Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) related market access obstacles in some countries, our exports of marine products have registered a positive growth rate of 11.10% during 2004-05 as compared to the previous year.

(b) As per the reports received from the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), there were cases of rejection of 23 consignments of marine products, particularly shrimps, during the year 2003 and 25 during the year 2004 in the EU countries reportedly on account

of anti-biotic residue, bacterial inhibitors, heavy metal residue and micro-biological contaminations etc.

(c) While SPS related standards enforced by our trading partners pose initial challenges causing higher costs of compliance, they create opportunities as well.

(d) In order to increase the export of marine products, Government have been taking several steps, which include schemes for extending financial assistance to the seafood processing industry; steps to upgrade processing facilities to meet international standards of hygiene and quality; expansion of aquaculture; imparting training to aquaculture farmers to adopt sound management practices; assistance for production of value-added products for export; and marketing support.

**Purchase of defence aircrafts**

†761. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI:
SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR:
SHRI SURENDRA LATH:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether to improve combat capacity Government propose to purchase 126 aircrafts, 80 helicopters and refueller aircrafts that refuel in the sky;

(b) if so, the extent of success achieved in this regard;

(c) by when this purchase would be made and whether all-out efforts would be made to bring transparency in this procurement; and

(d) if so, the details thereof so as to maintain transparency?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Government constantly reviews the security environment and accordingly decides to induct appropriate equipment and to make other arrangements for adequate defence preparedness. It would not be interest of national security to give further details.

(c) and (d) The purchase of defence aircrafts and helicopters would be made in accordance with the established defence procurement procedure. This procedure envisages a time frame of two to three years for conclusion of contracts in such major purchases. The defence procurement procedure aims to achieve the highest degree of probity and public accountability, transparency in operations, free competition and impartiality.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.